CITY OF EL CENTRO

SERVICE AREA PLAN

1995

SERVICES: FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL

A. Description of Service

The term "fire protection" typically includes the three types of services provided by the fire department. These include fire suppression, that is, actually extinguishing fires, fire prevention, that is, trying to prevent fires from starting in the first place, and third emergency medical services. Fire suppression involves the active use of personnel and equipment in putting out fires in urban and wildland areas, while fire prevention is done through routine inspections, code enforcement and educational programs. Emergency Medical Services entails pre-hospital medical care given victims of accidents and/or sudden illness.

B. Existing Level and Range of Services

The study area is located within the jurisdiction of two fire protection agencies. The County of Imperial is the primary provider of fire fighting and suppression services in the study area and in all adjacent unincorporated areas. The City of El Centro Fire Department's two stations provide service to portions of the study area through a Mutual Aid Agreement with the County.

Established mutual aid arrangements in which the City is given some responsibility for providing fire protection to areas within the County immediately adjacent to City land, and the County is given primary responsibility for protecting the balance of the City's existing sphere of influence. When calls are received within this sphere area, the responsible agency shall dispatch the required engine company and/or squad prior to calling for assistance from the other party.

The Imperial County Fire Department has facilities and equipment located as follows:

Fire Station	Apparatus
#1 2514 La Brucherie Road Imperial, CA 92251	1 Engine 1 Crash Truck 1 Squad
#2 Heber	1 Engine
#3 Seeley	1 Engine

The County Fire Department provides a full range of services including fire prevention, suppression, emergency medical aid, hazardous material abatement, disaster preparedness and review of development plans. The County's Fire Protection Plan contains four (4) fire response categories used to determine the response time/travel distance for primary and secondary fire stations according to the anticipated build-out of community areas. The department operates on a regional concept whereby two or more fire engines respond to any reported fire.

C. Feasibility of Extension

Since the proposed annexation application includes some inhabited and uninhabited land that is currently developed with single family residences, farms and fields, and only marginally affects the provision and level of services.

When the area is annexed to the City of El Centro, Station 2 will service the area from the same location. The County Fire Department does not foresee changes in its operation, or station placement in the future. However, additional fire stations will be required when development in the study area occurs and when engine company work loads require additional stations per the Fire Department "Fire Station Location Plan."

The City of El Centro Fire Department is primarily a structure-oriented protective force. The Department has not been organized or equipped to provide protection to the multi-faceted environment surrounding El Centro which includes urban areas of multi-story structures, wildland areas and rural farmland. To provide adequate fire protection, especially in the rural areas, the City of El Centro would need additional fire stations and at least one water tender type apparatus.

Areas within the existing City limits of El Centro are served by two fire stations belonging to the City Fire Department. Their location and equipment assigned to each is as follows:

Station	Equipment
#1 775 State Street	1 Engine Company 1 Pump 1 Squad 1 Reserve Engine
#2 900 Dogwood	1 Engine Company 1 Truck 1 Reserve Engine

There are a total of 10-12 on-duty firefighting personnel available during each 24-hour period. The department also employs staff for the Fire Administration Division and the Fire Prevention Division.

Each of the fire stations identified are available to serve portions of the existing and/or proposed sphere of influence areas through mutual aid agreements. However, in most cases, the response time to the more remote areas (such as southwest and north) is excessive. Therefore, fire suppression and EMS operations in these areas may be significantly impacted.

The standards for response times has been set at five (5) minutes for structure fires and three and a half minutes for medical aids by the El Centro Fire Department.

The City Fire Department uses a system of alarms (first through fifth alarm) to identify the level of resources needed to handle a specific emergency incident and to allow an orderly, incremental buildup of these resources as the situation may require. The "first alarm" response would involve two of the City's engine companies, one squad and the pump depending on the proximity of the companies to the incident. In addition, the shift battalion chief would respond as required. Typically, first alarm classifications are for structural fires, however, the department, has also developed a modified alarm classification operating procedures for hazardous material and major injury traffic accident type operations. The City Fire Department has also developed procedures for medical emergencies. A second through fifth alarm requires the recall of off-duty firefighters and requests for mutual aid.

In 1993, a total of 2,792 incidents were reported to the El Centro Fire Department, of these 357 were actual fires. The department responds to an average of 7-8 emergency calls per 24-hour shift. At this time, the department is having difficulty handling this level of emergency calls for service because of simultaneous calls. This call volume is also making it almost impossible to complete the non-emergency activities such as training, fire prevention inspections, public education and fire station apparatus and equipment maintenance.

D. Changes or Improvements In Service Level

According to Chief Feuerstein and the El Centro Fire Protection Plan, the following major changes are planned:

0 Fire Station #3 is planned for the southwest area of the City to provide for better response time in existing urbanized area and planned expansion to the

west. This site is located on La Brucherie south of Ross Avenue.

0 The recommended site for fourth fire station is in the north portion of the City. Land will be set aside in the area for a fire station site or an arrangement will be made with the City of Imperial or Imperial County for the joint use of a facility.

0 Depending upon the expansion of the City both in its sphere of influence and in changes in zoning, additional stations may be required in the future.

E. Financing of Service

0 Eventually, Fire Station #1 will have to be completely rehabbed as it was constructed in 1949. The El Centro Fire Department is totally dependent on the City's general fund for its operational and capital improvements needs, except for some developer fees and user fees. Funding for the Fire Department is inadequate according to requests from the Fire Department. They have shown that there is a significant handicap in the department's ability to handle an increase in calls with their two engine company staffing. Currently, two engine companies are sent to an alarm leaving no other apparatus available for additional calls for emergency services. Therefore, there is the need to provide a third engine and station.

Other non-emergency facilities are also needed: Training facility, hazardous materials unit and administrative quarters.

In view of the discussion in the previous paragraphs, there is a need to implement non-traditional funding mechanisms. Some of the options are:

0 Establishment of a Mello-Roos district for improvements for fire protection facilities.

0 Development of more public/private partnerships for economic reasons and enhanced operations for both the public and private sectors.

0 Development of a more regional approach to fire protection in the Imperial Valley.

0 Implementation of a sprinkler ordinance for every new structure regardless of its size or use; non-combustible roofing ordinance and an old building rehabilitation ordinance.

If these options were to be implemented, they would create a greater efficiency in fire protection and increased quality of protection which will alter required ratios of fire fighters to population and spatial requirements with regard to proximity of development to fire stations.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

SERVICE: PUBLIC ROADS

A. Description of Service

The construction and maintenance of local roads within public rights-of-way is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. State and federal highways are built with a combination of federal, state and local funds and are usually maintained by the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

B. Existing Level and Range of Services

Within the study area, construction and maintenance service of local roads is provided by the Imperial County Public Works Department with office(s) in El Centro. Any street improvements are installed and inspected according to standards developed by the County Public Works Department.

The County does not maintain dedicated local rights-of-way on a regular basis. If the condition of a particular road becomes a non-emergency safety concern, the Public Works Department must first allocate the funds for the repair in the budget for the following fiscal year. In emergency situations, the County road maintenance yard in El Centro would be assigned to conduct repairs and/or cleanup.

C. Feasibility of Extension

Upon annexation of the study area, planning and improvements for public roads will become the responsibility of the City of El Centro. The City has one maintenance yard located at 320 Orange Avenue. The City's standards for construction and maintenance of street improvements differ considerably from those utilized by the County. For example, during construction, the City requires developers to install full street and parkway improvements within the public right-of-way regardless of the size of the new development. Also, the City follows a regular maintenance schedule which would be applied to streets in the study area once it is annexed. The proposed annexation phasing program does not affect the provision nor level of service.

D. Changes or Improvements in Service Level

Both the City and the County require basic street improvements to be installed upon development. However, residents in the study area will notice additional changes or improvements in service level through the following:

Greater use of specimen-sized trees within public rights-of-way;

better overall maintenance of existing streets including periodic sweeping, resurfacing, restriping and repair of potholes throughout the study area as sections annex to the City;

an overall higher priority assigned to the response to citizen complaints regarding the condition of City streets.

E. Financing of Service

The construction and maintenance of local streets is financed by the City with money from the Gas Tax and General Fund. As new development occurs, the City will require developers to install all public improvements within the right-of-way adjacent to the site. In older urbanized areas, the City may take on the responsibility and expense of street improvements, including widening, reconstruction, resurfacing, realignment and landscaping. Ultimately, the City also assumes responsibility for installation and maintenance of those improvements through assessment districts or other related funding sources.

Typically, street construction and maintenance involves a major commitment of resources for a community. In the past, the City has utilized gas tax funds assessment districts, redevelopment funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, Measure D funds, exactions and other methods to help finance the construction and maintenance of streets.

SERVICE: FLOOD CONTROL

A. Description of Service

Flood control refers to the planning, design, construction and maintenance of flood control facilities by the County or the City Public Works Department.

B. Existing Level and Range of Service

The study area lies within the established jurisdictional boundaries of the Imperial County and the Imperial Irrigation District.

The City of El Centro is not designated as being in a flood plain as designated by the National Flood Insurance Program. Drainage from the City enters into the Imperial Irrigation District Central Main to the north of El Centro in three (3) areas. One drain is the Lotus Drain on the west side of City, the second drain is along State Highway 86, and the last drain is in First Street extended northerly from Commercial Avenue. The City does not have a complete underground drainage system and has utilized detention basins for the last 20 years, or so, to control the rate of run-off from developments. The design of these basins are now approved by the Imperial Irrigation District and City. It is anticipated that in the future the Imperial Irrigation District will form a drainage district for the County as a whole.

C. Feasibility of Extension

Development of the study area will entail construction of residential houses, commercial and retail buildings and the associated infrastructure. Development will require drainage facilities to be installed prior to occupying to protect against flood damage.

D. Changes or Improvements in Service Level

The City of El Centro has acquired an excellent track record of cooperation with the perial Irrigation District over the years. As various state and federal regulatory agencies develop increasingly complex programs of regional scope and magnitude, this cooperation will undoubtedly continue. It can be expected that there will not be a change in the high levels of service already provided.

E. Financing of Service

This service is financed by developers as construction occurs.

SERVICE: LAW ENFORCEMENT

A. Description of Services

The law enforcement function described in this section is provided by the El Centro Police Department. The Police Department enforces the basic State and Local laws and ordinances designed to protect lives and property and the general community welfare. Other law enforcement exists in the study area but will not be discussed here. They include the California Highway Patrol, the Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Land Management, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Naturalization and Immigration Service and other various specialized agencies.

B. Existing Level and Range of Services:

The entire study area is presently within the jurisdiction of the Imperial County Sheriff's office: Deputies for this area of the Valley are dispatched out of the main jail at 328 Applestill Road, approximately three (3) miles south of El Centro. The majority of the area under consideration for annexation is undeveloped land, much of the area is already within the parameters of our patrol response area because our patrol units often pass through the area or close to it while responding to calls for service in other areas of the City. As the area is developed, the City will need to add sufficient resources to the Police Department as necessary to provide police services to match the increased calls for police services.

The Police Department's strategic plan anticipates this kind of growth and provides staffing and facility plans to insure police services will be maintained throughout the City.

The El Centro Police Department has 49 sworn personnel and 28 non-sworn support personnel, and utilizes 31 patrol vehicles. The department presently provides a level of 1.33 officers per 1,000 population.

Calls for service are prioritized by urgency and need, and are responded to primarily from "beat" areas rather than from the station. The average response time on routine calls is 5-10 minutes. On an emergency call, it is about 3-5 minutes.

C. Feasibility of Extension

The department has three (3) divisions:

(1) Patrol Division, which includes Traffic, Animal Control and Community Service Officers.

(2) Investigations, which includes the Narcotic Bureau.

(3) Administrative Services which includes Records, Communications, Personnel, Volunteers and Crime Prevention, etc.

The El Centro Police Department has no contractual agreements for mutual aid with other agencies but verbal agreements are extant which provide for contingencies such as these. The El Centro Police Department does provide dispatching for El Centro Fire, Imperial Police Department, Calipatria Fire Department, etc.

D. Changes or Improvements in Service Level

The additional area covered by the proposed annexation would require no additional men or equipment in and of itself. The additional citizens would impact the officers per 1000 population formula in a negative fashion.

Additional plant resources needs are being studied at the present time.

Although the proposed annexation proposal does not affect the provision and level of service, the Police Department has general concerns regarding the annexation. These concerns include the following:

- Increased traffic from new construction;
- Radio communications in these areas although the 800 MHZ system should solve this problem.

E. Financing of Service

The City of El Centro budgets approximately $5.27 million annually for police services. Almost all of the money is and will continue to be derived from the City's general fund.

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